

# Pickers'

## Life-Altering Decisions



Written & Illustrated By  
Gary Antilla

# Dedication

To my family. Especially my wife Jane, who has taught me to always look at my glass as half-full. To Angela, our first-born and her husband Ryan. To David, who carries my surname and his fiancée Kim. They have added the spice that flavors my life!

To all the children who believe Pickers' promise that "Good things happen to good people." You have the power and wisdom to make decisions that will help you continue to be good people. And you are good people!

To the educators who use this book to change children's lives. Each child you work with is his or her parent's most-prized possession. Your momentous task will provide you with great rewards and huge dividends. Believe in the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

~ Gary Antilla



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# How To Use *Pickers' Life-Altering Decisions*

*Pickers' Life-Altering Decisions* is a series of story-based lessons that focus on destructive behaviors young people encounter all the time. Because opportunities to engage in these behaviors usually occur when no adult is present, young people must make the difficult decision to participate or not participate in them without benefit of adult counsel. Destructive decisions can result from peer pressure, inability to make good decisions, or ignoring potential consequences. *Pickers' Life-Altering Decisions* addresses these issues and provides educators with information for helping young people make good decisions in such situations.

*Pickers' Life-Altering Decisions* addresses 10 of the behaviors young people may encounter. Each lesson contains:

- ASCA standards
- a relevant story you may read to the students
- interactive instructions interspersed throughout the story
- comprehension questions to be used at the end of the story
- comprehension activities

If the students are unfamiliar with the Pickers character, read *A Message From Pickers* (page 6) and show them the illustration on page 9.

Each lesson can be used in a variety of ways.

- Read or tell the story to the students and have them orally discuss or write answers to the questions at the end. Have them complete the *Pickers' Puzzle* or end the lesson with the discussion questions.
- Distribute the *Pickers' Picture Story*, crayons, and pencils. As you read the story, stop at each *italicized* instruction and have the students complete the drawing on their activity sheet. When you finish reading, select students to use the pictures they've drawn to retell the story. (*Note:* If the blocks on the *Pickers' Picture Story* pages are too small for your students, distribute drawing paper.) *Pickers' Puzzle* may be added to the lesson.

# Pickers' Pranks

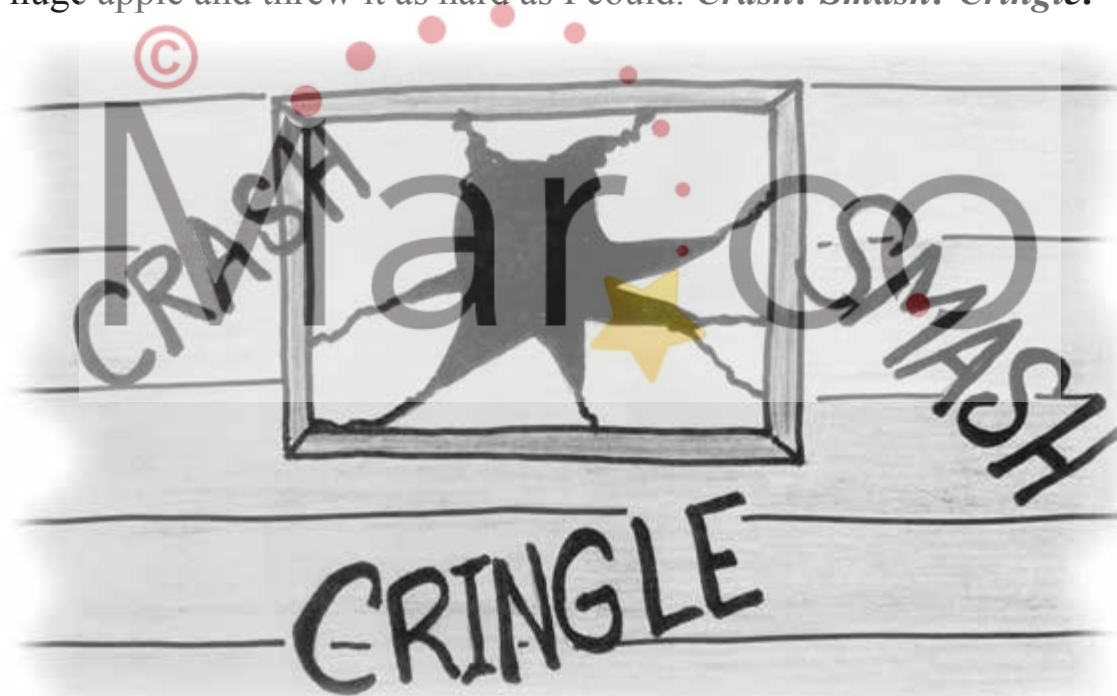


**I** was always lots of fun, so everybody liked to play with me. Most of the kids at school and around the block wanted me as a friend. And you know what? I felt very *important!*

☞ *Instruction #1: In the first block, draw someone who feels important.*

Most of the time, a bunch of us went swimming or skating or just rode around on our bikes. One summer day, we were eating apples from a friend's tree. One of the guys picked up an apple and threw it at an old garage next door. It was a long throw, but he hit the garage door.

Pretty soon, we were all trying to hit the garage with apples. When that wasn't fun any more, I said, "I bet you guys can't hit that window." Everybody tried, but most of the guys couldn't throw that far. That's when I picked up a huge apple and threw it as hard as I could. *Crash! Smash! Cringle!*



☞ *Instruction #2: In the second block, draw an apple breaking the window.*

The next sound we heard was a loud “HEY!”

*Instruction #3: In the third block, draw a man yelling.*

A man stormed out of the house and saw Dylan and Kevin walking down the street. They weren't with us. They just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and the man grabbed them. He didn't care that they said they hadn't done anything. He was too busy shouting that he was taking them to their parents.



They got the blame, and we laughed so hard we were rolling on the ground. We couldn't believe how easy it was to get away with that.

☞ *Instruction #4: In the fourth block, draw the pranksters rolling on the ground and laughing.*



# Bullying & Teasing: Questions



1. What does it feel like to be picked on by a group?

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2. If you've never been picked on, how do you *think* it feels?

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3. How can you include others in school activities?

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4. How can you help someone who may be teased because he/she looks, dresses, or acts differently?

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5. What can you do to help someone who is being teased or bullied all the time?

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6. What should you do if someone tells you he or she would like to hurt someone or is going to bring a weapon to school?

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# Cyberspace- A Dangerous Place



**Cyberbullying** is when cell phones, e-mail, instant messages, Internet blogs, or chat rooms are used to harass and threaten someone. Most parents and children are just learning how dangerous this new form of bullying can be.

☞ *Instruction #1: In the first block, draw at least three cyberbullying tools.*

Some of the stories I've heard are heartbreaking and terrible. Kids sometimes send threatening messages or create Web sites with pictures, cartoons, stories, or nasty jokes about others. They do it from home, and one student sent messages from the school's empty, unlocked computer room.

Jane, a young girl I knew, created her own Web site. After she posted it on the Internet, she started getting harassing comments. Several people said they were 11 or 12 years old and wanted to meet her. Although Jane put her picture on the site, it would have been better if she had not. However, she was smart not to give her phone number or address or other personal information. Even though she didn't include any information that could lead to physical abuse, she got plenty of verbal abuse. And that was right there for everyone to see.

☞ *Instruction #2: In the second block, write the name of an Internet site kids use to tell about themselves.*

I'm older now, so I've learned a few things about the Internet, instant messages, chat rooms, and networking sites.

1. Cyberspace harassment occurs when someone uses a cell phone or the Internet to say something to or about you that makes you feel threatened or uncomfortable. Harassment is in the eye of the beholder. This means that a spoken or written comment that feels threatening to you can be seen as harassment, even if the other person didn't mean it to be. Let the person know how you feel about the harassment, then report it to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult. This warns the person to stop harassing you.

☞ *Instruction #3: In the third block, draw someone who is harassed.*

2. If you're being harassed, tell your parents or an adult at school. If your parents get involved, don't worry. They can help you handle this problem.

☞ *Instruction #4: In the fourth block, write the names of people you would tell if you were being harassed.*

# Pickers' Puzzle

**Directions:** This is a different kind of Word Find. Decide on an answer to each statement, then see if you can find your answer. Clue: The answers can be found in "Skipping School And Poor Grades."

☉ Find 3 characters in the story.

\_\_\_\_\_

☉ Find the grade in which David started skipping school.

\_\_\_\_\_

☉ Find 3 things David did when he stayed home from school.

\_\_\_\_\_

☉ Find 2 things that made David different.

\_\_\_\_\_

☉ Find what David needed in order to graduate from high school.

\_\_\_\_\_

☉ Find 2 punishments David was given for skipping school.

\_\_\_\_\_

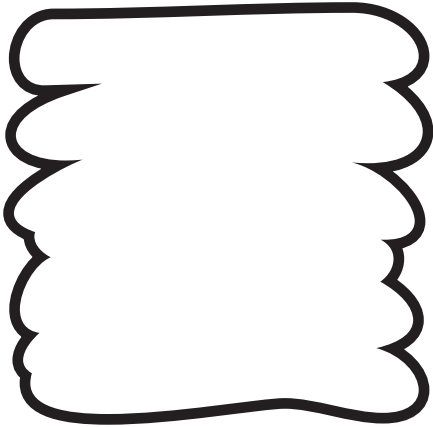
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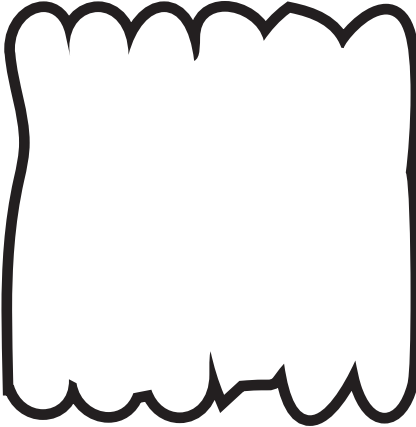
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# Skipping School & Poor Grades Picture Story

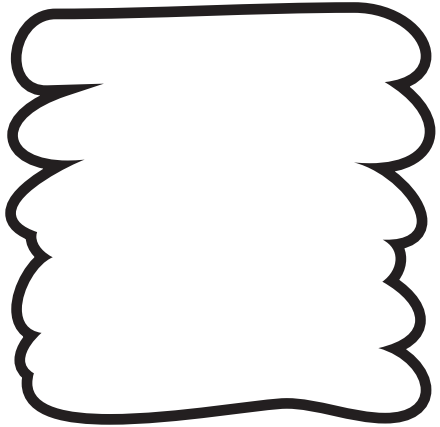
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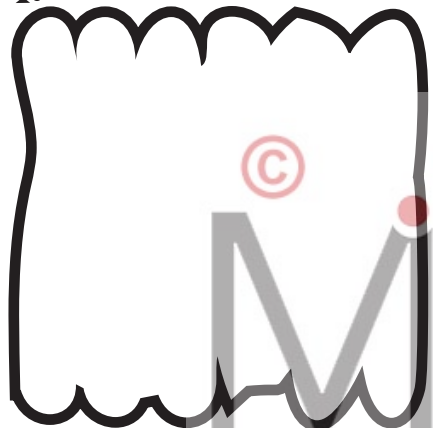
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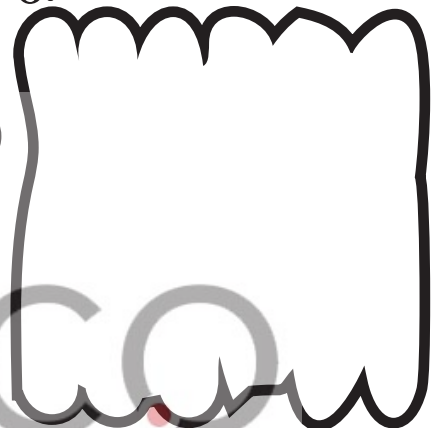
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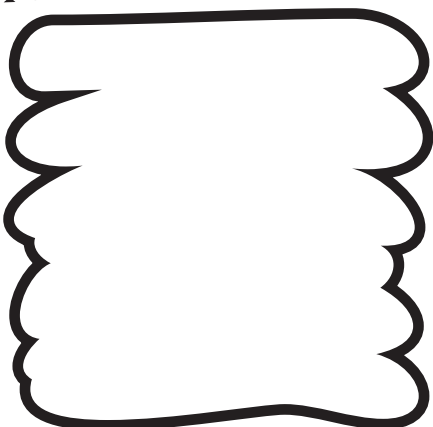
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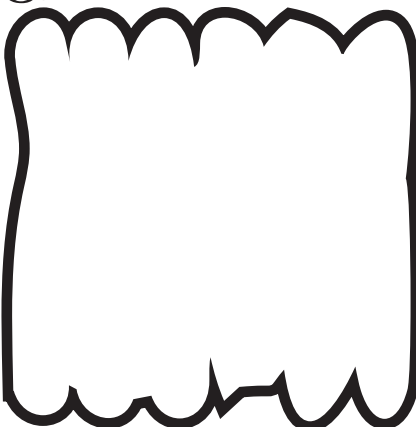
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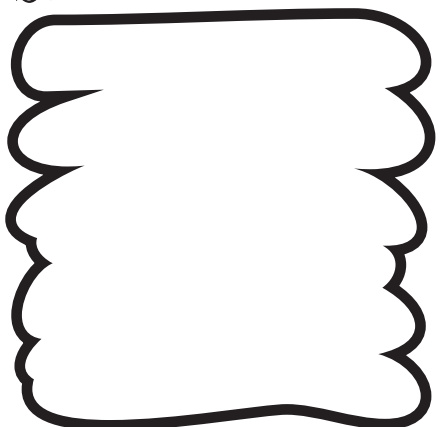
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8.



9.



# Friends We Choose: ASCA Standards

## Personal/Social Development

*Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.*

**PS:A1 Acquire Self-Knowledge**

PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings.

PS:A1.9 Demonstrate cooperative behavior in groups

**PS:A2 Acquire Interpersonal Skills**

PS:A2.3 Recognize, accept, respect and appreciate individual difference

PS:A2.4 Recognize, accept, respect, and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity

PS:A2.8 Learn how to make and keep friends.

*Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills*

**PS:C1 Acquire Safety Skills**

PS:C1.10 Learn techniques for managing stress and conflict.

PS:C1.11 Learn coping skills for managing life events.

